

stone pre-
ciousness
right II, if
you no day?

A
P
U
N
T
E
S

God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be for good, and not for evil. How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human beings, than on jewels and gold. *Herold Weiss*

San Pablo, la libertad y el nacionalismo

Seeking Peace, "With Justice and Dignity":

The People's Struggle in Chiapas, Mexico

Gonzalo Castillo-Cárdenas

Hispanic Theology and the Apocalyptic Imagination

C. Gilbert Romero

A Biblical and Theological Reflection on Faith

Communities: Eleven Characteristics of the

Early Faith Communities

Roberto L. Gómez

Reflexiones

teológicas

desde

el

margen

hispano

Miguel
Cárdenas

San Tom
flor y
olivos

1 y 2
mujeres
Lambert

¿El Antiguo?

"With childish folly to the war he came,
Laden with store of gold."¹

But he who loves of ornament, which is far from caring for virtue, but claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled.

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 872.

PROCESSED

DEC 18 1995

GTU LIBRARY

Year 15, No. 4, Winter, 1995

Año 15, No. 4, Invierno, 1995

PRESENTACION

Los cuatro artículos incluidos en el presente número reflejan algo de la variedad de preocupaciones que se mueven en medio de la iglesia hispana, y al mismo tiempo la coherencia entre dichas preocupaciones. El primero es del Dr. Herold Weiss, Profesor de Estudios Religiosos en St. Mary's College, quien explora la posibilidad de emplear una teología paulina para enfrentarse al exclusivismo nacionalista que tanto daño está causando en el mundo contemporáneo. El segundo, por el Dr. Gonzalo Castillo-Cárdenas, Profesor Asociado de Iglesia y Sociedad y Estudios del Tercer Mundo en Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, ofrece el ejemplo concreto de Chiapas, donde la injusticia económica se conjuga con la opresión cultural, precisamente a base del mismo nacionalismo mal entendido que Weiss trata de deshacer. El tercer artículo es del Dr. Gilbert Romero, por mucho tiempo capellán de la Universidad del Estado de California en Los Angeles, y quien ahora ejerce su ministerio en la parroquia de Santo Tomás Moro, en Alhambra, California. En él, el Padre Romero apela a la imaginación apocalíptica y su relación con la religiosidad popular como un vehículo para una nueva hermenéutica, que ayuda al pueblo a enfrentarse precisamente a situaciones como la que describe Castillo-Cárdenas. Por último, el Dr. Roberto Gómez, Director del Concilio de la Conferencia de Río Grande, Iglesia Metodista Unida, vuelve al mismo Nuevo Testamento que Weiss estudia, pero ahora buscando paradigmas para lo que es ser una comunidad de fe en el mundo presente--concretamente, en el contexto del Plan Nacional Hispano de la Iglesia Metodista Unida.

Al ofrecer estos trabajos a nuestros lectores, les invitamos a que conjuguen todas estas preocupaciones en una reflexión y una acción eficaces y responsables en nuestros propios contextos de ministerio.

Apuntes (ISSN # 0279-9790) is published quarterly by the Mexican American Program, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275. Second class postage paid at Dallas, TX 75260 and additional mailing offices. Subscription is \$10.00 per year.

POSTMASTER, send address changes to: Apuntes, Mexican American Program, Perkins School of Theology, Southern University, Dallas, TX 75275.

Manuscripts are to be sent to our editorial offices: Apuntes, Justo L. González, Editor, 336 Columbia Dr., Decatur, GA 30030. **Materials sent in an IBM compatible system are much appreciated.**

Mailing and printing of **Apuntes** are provided by the United Methodist Publishing House.

San Pablo, la libertad y el nacionalismo

Herold Weiss

Los expertos en ciencias políticas no tienen duda alguna de que el nacionalismo es una de las características más destacadas del mundo moderno.¹ Si bien no todos lo definen de la misma manera ni están de acuerdo en qué consiste, o dónde se encuentran sus orígenes,² pareciera que todos concuerdan en que ha dejado una marca indeleble en nuestro siglo. La mayoría lo considera una fuerza negativa, una amenaza constante de la paz y la estabilidad,³ mientras que otros, que lo ven en términos positivos, aconsejan que su poder sobre las masas debe ser controlado cuidadosamente si se han de evitar resultados desastrosos.⁴

Ni los intelectuales liberales, ni los marxistas del siglo XIX tomaron al nacionalismo en serio. Ambos consideraron que al anhelar retener una identidad común y expresarla por medios políticos algunas antiguas tribus en las naciones modernas estaban manifestando fuerzas psicológicas regresivas; por lo tanto, aunque en forma distinta, ambos negaron al nacionalismo su razón de ser. El pasado de la tribu, según estos puntos de vista, debía ser superado por la humanidad moderna. La Europa iluminada no debía, entonces, quedarse estancada en un estado adolescente de su desarrollo como civilización.

De acuerdo con el liberalismo del siglo XIX, la igualdad ante la ley y los derechos individuales ocupan el primer lugar. Por lo tanto, la manifestación de instintos tribales debe ser considerada como primitivista y no se le debe dar lugar en pueblos que han avanzado a la madurez de la modernidad. Los regionalismos exhibidos como nacionalismos son una amenaza a la visión liberal de una

1 William Pfaff, *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism*, (Simon and Schuster, 1993) mantiene que el mundo moderno es el resultado del nacionalismo y ha quedado definido por él, y Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1992) quien lo describe como "the reality of our century."

2 Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1994) argumenta que es contraproducente hablar del nacionalismo en términos generales, siendo que en tal caso o se está defendiendo una ideología, o se está absolutizando abstracciones psico-históricas.

3 John Dunn, *Western Political Thought in the Face of the Future*, (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), p. 55, lo llama "the darkest political shame of the twentieth century."

4 Yael Tamir *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1993) afirma que el derecho a la cultura incluye el derecho a la autodeterminación cultural.

civilización gobernada por leyes y no por instintos.

Karl Marx distinguió a las naciones europeas con derechos históricos de otras que, por carecerlos, desaparecerían en la medida en que por medio de revoluciones la humanidad avanzara por el camino que la conduciría a la sociedad sin clases. Marx y sus discípulos consideraron los sentimientos nacionalistas como una ilusión, la creación de los demagogos, políticos, intelectuales y otros elitistas que manipulaban la masa ignorante para crear una identidad que no se fundamenta en la realidad histórica. En esta evaluación de la situación el marxismo fue algo perspicaz, y muchos hoy en día, que no comulgan con su ideología, están de acuerdo de que en muchas sociedades actuales el concepto de nación dominante ha sido creado egoístamente por patriotas, poetas y políticos que controlan el sistema educativo del país.

Quienes conciben el nacionalismo como un fenómeno que apareció en el escenario histórico debido a la disolución de los imperios modernos, comenzando con el napoleónico, considerarán un anacronismo inadmisible traer a colación lo que Pablo pudo haber dicho acerca del tema, y yo sería, en esas circunstancias, el primero en admitirlo. En tal caso tampoco se podría hablar del nacionalismo en Inglaterra cuando Enrique VIII rompió con el Papado, o del nacionalismo en Alemania en tiempos de Martín Lutero, mucho menos, entonces, del nacionalismo entre los judíos en tiempos de Pablo.⁵ Sin embargo, se puede preguntar, ¿No sufrían los judíos de aquellos tiempos la opresión del Imperio Romano? ¿No estaban ellos tramando continuamente estrategias de liberación? ¿No soñaban ellos ser otra vez una nación respetada y admirada entre las naciones? No era la teología judía prevaleciente una teología nacionalista?

La teología de la restauración afirmaba que los tiempos gloriosos del poder judío durante los reinados de David y Salomón serían restaurados. Dios restituiría el reino a Israel (Hech 1:6). La restauración del reino era la imagen central de la *Weltanschauung* de aquellos que veían en ese evento lo esencial para un futuro feliz. Según ellos, Israel jugaba el papel principal en el drama de la historia humana. La salvación de los gentiles dependía de que se llevara a cabo la restauración del reino a un Israel que por el momento carecía de independencia nacional. Si bien es cierto que las batallas que se pelearon en tiempo de los macabeos fueron, en parte, luchas por controlar el templo entre dos casas

⁵ No cabe duda que el concepto de nación característico de los tiempos modernos no existía ni en el tiempo de Pablo, ni en el de Enrique VIII.

aristocráticas judías, su objetivo también fue el de restaurar el trono de David.⁶

La esperanza mesiánica de la restauración de las fortunas de Israel es la única explicación de las numerosas revueltas en tiempos de Herodes, a pesar de que los gobernadores herodianos fueron, en términos generales, muy benéficos con los judíos. Ellos construyeron el admirable puerto de Cesarea marítima, edificaron ciudades importantes, reconstruyeron el templo de Jerusalén y consiguieron para los judíos varios privilegios y derechos legales en el Imperio Romano. Por todos estos beneficios recibieron el odio de los judíos que los consideraban idumeos aprovechadores, pagados por los romanos. El libro de los Hechos de los Apóstoles menciona una revuelta dirigida por Teudas con cuatrocientos hombres, y otra bajo el mando de Judas el galileo, y Flavio Josefo escribe acerca de los zelotes y otros grupos que buscaban la restauración de la independencia nacional. Es con este trasfondo en mente que quisiera considerar a Pablo y el nacionalismo.

Para Pablo Cristo significó libertad. El centro de su predicación del evangelio consiste de las palabras de esa frase pleonástica, "Para libertad Cristo nos libertó" (Gal 5:1), y esa oportuna aclaración, "Ahora bien, el Señor es el Espíritu, y donde está el Espíritu del Señor, allí hay libertad" (2 Cor 3:17). Pero hay que reconocer que en su concepto de libertad Pablo fue un realista y supo que la libertad no es sólo un slogan con el cual las masas se enardecen en paroxismos emocionales.

En mi patria, el Uruguay, se recuerda con emoción a "los treinta y tres orientales"⁷ que alrededor de 1830 llevaron a cabo la independencia nacional bajo la bandera con la inscripción "Libertad o Muerte." Ese slogan fue muy efectivo cuando se requería la acción sacrificada de un pueblo. Pero Pablo reconoció que la libertad no se encuentra envuelta en un slogan. En realidad, la libertad no se encuentra en ninguna parte. La libertad no se pone las botas y protege a todos los que se cobijen bajo ella. La libertad es una relación.

Para tener sentido, cualquier discurso acerca de la libertad debe especificar *de qué* o *de quién* es que uno es libre, y *para qué* o *para quién*. Dije que en materia de libertad Pablo fue realista precisamente porque especificó estos detalles. Mientras que los marxistas consideraron al nacionalismo como una ilusión, Pablo consideró una ilusión a la libertad de por sí. Nadie en la tierra

6 No es mi intención afirmar que la teología de la restauración era la única teología judía del primer siglo. Sin duda alguna hubo quienes creían que la salvación histórica estaba en la convivencia con el imperio romano, con un gobierno local "teocrático," como lo denomina Flavio Josefo, es decir un gobierno en manos de los sacerdotes.

7 Siendo que el nombre completo del país es "La Banda Oriental del Uruguay," o sea, las tierras al este del río Uruguay, un oriental es un uruguayo.

puede considerarse la fuente o el recipiente de la libertad. Es por eso que él no dijo que la libertad existía donde hubiera cristianos presentes, sino donde el Espíritu del Señor estuviera presente. Esto quiere decir que las criaturas encuentran la libertad sólo en el Creador.

La libertad dada por el Señor, según Pablo, es libertad *de* la ley, libertad *del* pecado, y libertad *de* los señores y poderes que rigen los eones cósmicos. ¿Cómo se transpone esto a la cosmología en que vivimos hoy?

El judío del primer siglo suponía que se encontraba en un cosmos que ya no estaba controlado directamente por Dios, sino que había caído al tenebroso abismo y estaba bajo la influencia directa de otro poder cósmico: el pecado. En los eones que separaban el cielo de la tierra, los tronos, los dominios, las potestades y los ángeles ejercían su poder sobre la vida de los seres humanos. Aun la ley mosaica había llegado a la tierra por intermedio de estos poderes (Gal 2:19) y dividía a la humanidad entre judíos y gentiles. Este era un cosmos caracterizado por la enemistad (Efe 2:16). Esta era la condición de un cosmos que ya no estaba bajo el control directo de su Creador.

Para Pablo, sin embargo, la muerte y la resurrección de Jesucristo habían demostrado el poder de Dios para salvar, para establecer su justicia. Al proclamar la libertad *de* la ley, *del* pecado y *de* los poderes cósmicos y, al mismo tiempo, la libertad *para* la justicia y *para* Dios, Pablo puso patas arriba la *Weltanschauung* judía, aun cuando por ello de ninguna manera quería despojarse de su identidad judía.

Pablo entendió que la libertad no es algo que una persona adquiere como propiedad personal, sino que es una condición que puede existir entre aquellos que forman una comunidad. Como posibilidad, la libertad depende de poderes externos para su sostenimiento. Es por eso que cada comunidad le da a la libertad una configuración distinta, y los que viven en ella experimentan diferentes posibilidades de libertad. Si la libertad ha de alcanzar más allá de la vida individual, debe tener su origen fuera del individuo. Una libertad creada por una ideología particular, como la democracia, el capitalismo, el comunismo, alcanza sólo lo abarcado por esa ideología. Una libertad sustentada por el dinero alcanza sólo hasta donde llegue su poder económico. Una libertad que tiene sus fuentes en el uso de la fuerza, o de las armas, está limitada al alcance de ese poder. Una de las lecciones más difíciles de aprender es que la libertad alcanzada por el poder de las armas no es libertad para la democracia, o cualquier otra ideología de nuestra preferencia. La libertad sostenida por el poder económico no es libertad para la felicidad y la paz.

A Pablo le interesaba la libertad última, la libertad de la muerte, la

libertad para la vida, para Dios. Según él, el evangelio es el poder que sostiene esa libertad. El evangelio no es un sistema de doctrinas, o una enseñanza que merece seria consideración por su poder intelectual. Para Pablo el evangelio es "el poder de Dios para salvar" (Rom 11:16). La libertad de la cual él escribió está sostenida por ese poder.

Es legítimo, entonces, preguntar ¿Qué salvación realiza este poder? Aquí es donde viene al caso la teología de la restauración. ¿Entendió Pablo a la libertad como aquella que ponía en efecto la restauración del reino a Israel? La respuesta, obviamente, es NO.

Pablo fue un judío apocalíptico. En términos generales, el apocalipticismo entre los judíos compartía las esperanzas de la teología de la restauración. El Apocalipsis de Juan, el teólogo, también comparte esta perspectiva. En este libro se lee acerca del pueblo de los santos del Altísimo que en la tierra sufre persecución y martirio y clama debajo del altar del templo, pero cuyo triunfo es seguro. Los santos han de habitar la Nueva Jerusalén donde se encuentra el trono del Rey de Reyes y Señor de Señores. El altar, el trono, Jerusalén, son los símbolos de la nación que triunfa y perdura gozando de las bendiciones de la vida, la salvación. En las cartas paulinas, sin embargo, el templo, el altar y Jerusalén no forman parte de la esperanza del futuro. Israel no es el eje de la historia humana. Como nación ya no tiene función soteriológica.

Pablo visualizó la salvación como la existencia glorificada en que la creación entera participa completa e igualmente (Rom 8:21, 30). El estaba a la expectativa de la *parusía* del Señor que viene a juzgar al mundo, levantar a los muertos y trasladar a los santos vivos (1 Cor 15:24-26, 51-54). No tuvo ninguna duda de que estaría vivo cuando ese maravilloso evento tuviera lugar en un futuro inmediato (1 Tes 4:15), y la historia ha demostrado cuán equivocado estaba en su cronología. Pero aún cuando sea así, hay que reconocer lo concreto de su fe en la pasada revelación de la justicia de Dios en Cristo, y de su esperanza de un futuro con Cristo. Estas las expresó escribiendo, "Porque en esta esperanza fuimos salvos" (Rom 8:24; cp. Rom 5:5, Gal 5:5).

Lo importante en todo esto es que para el apóstol el futuro, no importa cual sea su concepción, no desplaza al presente. Nótese la expresión "fuimos salvos." Pablo vivió comprometido con actualizar, por medio de su vida de amor en la tierra, tanto el pasado de la muerte y la resurrección de Jesucristo que afirmaba por la fe, como el futuro de la existencia en gloria en el cual tenía puesta su esperanza. Las comunidades cristianas de fe y esperanza eran el medio por el cual Cristo continuaba presente en la tierra, no mística sino socialmente, en medio del trajín de la vida cotidiana.

La preocupación de Pablo era que esas comunidades sociales no fueran divididas por las fuerzas egoístas que siempre han funcionado como factores divisorios. La política, la cultura, la naturaleza han contribuido con criterios usados para fragmentar no solamente las comunidades sino aun a la humanidad entera, para mantenerlas en continuas luchas internas. Pablo se percató de lo artificial y lo irreal de esos criterios. Para él Cristo trajo la libertad de la necesidad de dividir la creación.⁸ El poder del evangelio trae la libertad de todos los límites con que se fragmenta la humanidad. En Cristo "no hay judío ni griego, esclavo ni libre, varón ni hembra; porque todos vosotros sois uno en Cristo Jesús" (Gal 3:28).

Los herederos de los liberales y de los marxistas del siglo XIX sufrieron graves derrotas en el siglo XX porque su visión de las cosas incluía una concepción romántica de la naturaleza humana. Ellos postularon la historia sobre la base de agentes humanos puros y por lo tanto, esperaron demasiado de la agencia humana. El cristianismo tradicional, por su parte, funcionó como el contrapeso del liberalismo y del marxismo al esperar demasiado poco de los agentes humanos.⁹ El cristianismo tradicional exaltó la resignación y la paciencia como la virtud cristiana que le hace frente a las vicisitudes de la vida. Los cristianos fueron enseñados por ese cristianismo a esperar en Dios puesto que él es el único agente eficaz en la historia. Desde esta perspectiva la salvación depende de los milagros. La hermenéutica marxista notó correctamente que tal doctrina cubre los pecados de la clase opresora en la sociedad.

Poniendo a un lado lo que el cristianismo pudo enseñar a través de los siglos, hay que reconocer que Pablo enseñó que los cristianos deben ser realistas y saber que, mientras que por un lado dependen de Dios, por el otro son ellos mismos los agentes de la voluntad divina sobre la tierra (Rom 12:1-2). De sus comunidades de fe, Pablo requirió que funcionaran como el cuerpo de Cristo en el que cada miembro cumple su función responsablemente. Pablo mantuvo en equilibrio su visión de la futura existencia en gloria totalmente revestida por el Espíritu con las contingencias de la existencia en la carne donde el amor de Dios debe ser actualizado según su voluntad. Los cristianos deben hacer presente en la sociedad en que viven el poder del evangelio para liberar y salvar. Pero este poder nunca es poseído por un grupo elitista que mantiene al "otro" a la distancia. El poder del evangelio que hace presente la libertad, en primera instancia, libera a los mismos cristianos de la tentación de querer imponer una concepción de la voluntad de Dios sobre el "otro." Es por eso que el poder del evangelio no puede

8 Bajo la influencia de Pablo un discípulo suyo resumió este entendimiento de Cristo al describir la cruz como el instrumento con el cual se derribó la pared del templo que impedía que los gentiles tuvieran acceso al altar (Efe 2:14).

9 Nicholas Lash, "All Shall Be Well: Christian and Marxist Hope," en su libro *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (SCM Press, 1985), pp. 202-215.

ser igualado con una ideología, ni siquiera con una ideología cristiana. El evangelio debe tener poder para librar de todas las ideologías que se puedan asentar en la mente humana reclamando el poder para "purificar" (o sea, dividir o fragmentar) a la humanidad.

Pablo fue realista acerca de la agencia para la salvación. La salvación no se alcanza por "simples" o "puros" agentes humanos, o por una nación que se ha purificado a sí misma, como la teología de la restauración en tiempos de Pablo y el marxismo más recientemente enseñaran. Una de las muchas cosas notables en Pablo, el ex-fariseo, es que rápidamente abandonó el lenguaje de la pureza, el lenguaje de la expurgación que arraza con lo pernicioso o lo deformado, considerado contrario a la naturaleza. El nacionalismo moderno, sin embargo, se ha caracterizado por su necesidad de establecer criterios para eliminar a los que son juzgados impuros por aquellos que imponen criterios de pureza.¹⁰ El nacionalismo encuentra en la naturaleza o la cultura el fundamento para ideologías que establecen las normas para juzgar quién es digno de participar en la salvación que se ha de lograr como nación. Pablo, por el contrario, no solamente enseñó la tolerancia y la co-existencia, sino que insistió en el poder del evangelio para eliminar la necesidad de juzgar al "otro" (Rom 14:1-10, 2:11). Según Pablo, Dios no eligió a una nación en el pasado una vez por todas con la misión de mantenerse pura. Al contrario, Dios continúa siempre activo en la historia, incluyendo y eliminando a medida que va formando a su pueblo (Rom 9-11). El linaje no es la llave para la vida y la salvación. La elección de Dios es dinámica en la historia y siempre esta abierta para el "otro" (Rom 9:6-24). El poder del evangelio nos libra de la necesidad de asumir el papel de dioses y dividir a la humanidad de acuerdo con nuestros prejuicios, particularmente nuestra lealtad nacionalista. Es por eso que la teología del apóstol Pablo tiene, en su mismo centro, que entendiérselas con la cuestión de la elección y la ley,¹¹ temas que estaban destrozando espiritualmente a la teología de la restauración.

Lo dicho anteriormente de ninguna manera quiere decir que Pablo pensó que Israel ya no tenía razón de ser y que ya no se consideraba a sí mismo judío. Al contrario, si bien en Cristo no hay ni judío ni gentil, Pablo se identificó explícitamente con sus conciudadanos (Rom 9:1-3). Lo que se está argumentando es que Pablo consideró que Israel no debía concebirse a sí misma como agente exclusivo de la salvación con poderes de vida y de muerte sobre el "otro". El legado teológico más importante de Pablo es el de haber desnacionalizado su

10 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1994) describe el uso del lenguaje y la religión como criterios para esos fines.

11 Víctor Paul Furnish, "On Putting Paul in his Place," *JBL* 113 (1994) pp. 3-17 (17)) concuerda en colocar la elección y la ley al centro de la reflexión teológica paulina. Véase también E. P. Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), p. 117.

concepto de la libertad y de la salvación,¹² mientras que la teología de la restauración había nacionalizado las esperanzas escatológicas de Israel.¹³ Pablo rompió los lazos de este entendimiento mezquino de la salvación. Cristo para él no fue sólo un mesías judío. Cristo, Mesías en hebreo, ya para Pablo no era un título salvífico, sino "el apellido" de Jesús. Si bien, según la carne, Jesús era hijo de David, lo que cuenta es que por el poder del Espíritu que resucita a los muertos, Cristo es un nuevo Adán cósmico, en cuya imagen toda la humanidad puede tener vida (Rom 1:3-4; 1 Cor 15:47-49). El cuerpo de Cristo que Pablo veía presente sobre la tierra como una fuerza social en la humanidad no era el de un varón, libre, judío. El Cristo del evangelio con poder para dar vida ya era un ser escatológico vivo en el Espíritu por el poder de la resurrección.

Para Pablo la obra de Cristo no está relacionada ni con el templo, ni con el trono de David, ni con Jerusalén. Los emblemas de Israel están ausentes de su perspectiva teológica. Pablo no se libró del nacionalismo declarándolo ilusorio, la invención de poetas e intelectuales, sino que se libró de él al comprender que la Nueva Creación realizada por Dios en la resurrección de Cristo había integrado a toda la humanidad.¹⁴ La justicia y la paz no están esperando que el orden de la ley a nivel internacional establezca una realidad política transnacional. Hay que recordar que la libertad *en* la ley, garantizada *por* la ley, no necesariamente es libertad *para* la justicia. La justicia y la paz están esperando que las naciones dejen de destruirse a sí mismas en aras de la pureza racial, religiosa o cultural, y les den la bienvenida a todos sus pueblos como dignos de la vida que Dios les dio. El ideal de la pureza es antirrelacional y como consecuencia opuesto a la libertad.

El poder para la libertad y la vida no viene ni de la nación, ni de sus leyes. Aquí es donde Pablo se opuso radicalmente al judaísmo de su tiempo. El negó que la vida y la libertad tuvieran su fuente en la ley. Según él, la vida y la libertad tienen sólo una fuente, y ésta es la vida con la cual el Espíritu dotó a Cristo en su resurrección. Ambas cosas sólo se encuentran cuando se vive en Cristo, en el Espíritu. Si la vida se encuentra en las leyes, entonces la nación que vive según la ley y usa la ley para distinguirse a sí misma de las "otras", se considera el agente de la salvación del mundo, el eje de la rueda de la historia. Pero cuando "la ley y el orden social" se convierten en el objetivo de la vida, la opresión y la injusticia entran por la puerta de atrás. Puede que ciertas libertades sean una realidad *en* una nación, pero no debieran ser un privilegio *para* los que

12 El problema de la teología romántica moderna es que las desnacionalizó de manera individualista, mientras que Pablo lo hizo dentro de una concepción altamente comunitaria.

13 Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origin of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (Yale Univ. Press, 1988), p. 172, escribe, "In brief, Paul denationalizes Jewish restoration theology" (el énfasis es de la autora).

14 Herold Weiss, *Paul of Tarsus; His Gospel and Life* (Andrews Univ. Press, 1989).

pertenecen a la nación ideológicamente definida. A menos que la libertad sea *para* la vida de todos los miembros de la comunidad, no es libertad *de* la muerte.

El poder para la vida no se encuentra en ninguna nación independientemente, sino en la comunidad de las naciones, si es que la libertad que buscamos es la libertad para vivir sobre la tierra, y no sólo en nuestra pequeña aldea. La pureza del idioma, o de la raza, o de la religión, o el derecho al territorio, no constituyen la nación, sino la voluntad común de vivir en armonía. Si una nación tiene problemas de identidad es porque su identidad ya no se da por sentada, como debería ser el caso. Esto se debe a que hay en la nación quienes no participan de los beneficios de la vida nacional, o quienes quieren negar el derecho de participar al "otro." Pero la identidad no es algo que se forja *en abstracto*. Si lo fuera, Marx tenía razón al pensar que el nacionalismo es la creación quimérica de intelectuales y políticos. El poder para darnos un nombre no depende exclusivamente de nosotros mismos, sino también de que otros estén dispuestos a llamarnos por él. La vida humana hay que vivirla social y racionalmente. Si nuestra identidad ha quedado en duda, no es necesariamente porque hemos dejado de ser lo que somos, sino que hemos dejado de ser lo que el "otro" pensaba que éramos. Ser lo que somos incluye la habilidad de cambiar lo que somos, pues de lo contrario hemos vendido nuestro ser al pasado y hemos perdido nuestra libertad y nuestro futuro.

Ninguna nación puede encontrar su salvación en un pasado idealizado, como lo pretendiera la teología de la restauración. La salvación está en el futuro. La frase paulina, "porque en esta esperanza fuimos salvos," no nos invita a vivir mirando al pasado, sino que nos alienta a vivir el presente con las fuerzas que nos proveen tanto el pasado como el futuro. La absolutización del pasado nacional no es la base para la libertad y la salvación, sino lo opuesto. Las naciones pueden vivir exuberantemente y exaltar su cultura y sus riquezas naturales, de la misma manera que Pablo se glorió de ser hebreo de hebreos, de la tribu de Benjamín (Fil 3:5). Como argumenta Yael Tamir,¹⁵ un nacionalismo bien temperado es el requisito indispensable para la vida civil; la autodeterminación cultural y la identidad son necesarias. Pero la salvación de un pueblo está en el poder que lo transforma para darle la bienvenida al "otro," y de esa manera le permite permanecer abierto para el futuro. En este proceso de transformación su vida será enriquecida y vivirá en paz con sus vecinos.

Los cristianos que por diferentes razones, sociales o personales, hoy en día viven fuera de la nación que les vio nacer confrontan una serie de sentimientos, a veces conflictivos y casi siempre muy variados, para con su nación.

15 Véase la nota 4.

Mucho depende de la razón por la cual dejaron atrás a su país. Algunos se ven en tierra extraña como "la nación en exilio" con grandes ilusiones de que en un futuro cercano podrán retornar a su tierra natal para tomar control de los destinos políticos del país. Estos cuentan con que los correligionarios que dejaron atrás están planeando la revolución que les permitirá volver, o ellos mismos están en el extranjero planeando la revolución que piensan importar cuando regresen. Otros han dejado su familia, el paisaje conocido desde la infancia, la cultura y el idioma atrás en busca de una situación económica que les permita vivir con más dignidad. Tanto los unos como los otros salieron del territorio nacional sobre la base de una esperanza, ya sea política o económica. Solamente en casos concretos se puede evaluar si es que la esperanza estaba bien fundada.

Lo que nos interesa es considerar ¿Qué papel juega el nacionalismo para el que está fuera de su país? En el caso concreto del Hispano cristiano en los Estados Unidos, ¿Qué del nacionalismo? Pareciera que, en primer lugar, para el que vive en el extranjero el nacionalismo sirve como fuente de identidad y depositario del pasado. Como misionero en tierras extranjeras del mundo mediterráneo, Pablo siempre se identificó orgullosamente como el que era: un judío conciente de ser el beneficiario de grandes dones tradicionales de cultura y religión. Es traumático vivir transplantado, pero es imposible vivir sin raíces. El que en el extranjero pretende despojarse de su pasado puede que alcance a establecerse en el nuevo medio ambiente, pero muy probablemente vivirá llevado por los vientos del oportunismo, sin quilla moral.

La nostalgia por el pasado de un paisaje conocido, con la comida, el idioma y las costumbres sociales con que uno se crió, no es más que la afirmación del derecho a la cultura autóctona que da identidad y contexto a la vida de los seres humanos. El cristiano en el extranjero también tiene ese derecho, asimismo como el derecho de importar su cultura. Pero el cristiano tanto en su país como en el extranjero, no debiera usar criterios culturales para establecer divisiones en el cuerpo de Cristo. La manifestación del nacionalismo como reclamo al poder dentro de la iglesia, trae como consecuencia sólo la fragmentación del cuerpo de Cristo, y como tal, diría Pablo, niega la gracia de Dios y hace que Cristo haya muerto de balde, puesto que afirma la realidad de la creación caída en el pecado, en vez de la Nueva Creación en la resurrección de Cristo.

Para el cristiano hispano en los Estados Unidos es una tentación constante identificar al cristianismo con un nacionalismo cultural, que funciona ahora como contrapeso a la cultura norteamericana dominante. Según esta manera de ver las cosas, es en la cultura dominante que reina el pecado. Esta tentación debe de ser vencida por dos razones. En primera instancia, porque al idealizar la cultura del país de origen se está encubriendo el pecado que también la contamina y, en segundo lugar, porque en tal caso criterios nacionalistas funcionan como una

ideología que distorciona la verdad del evangelio. Cuando el nacionalismo se convierte en la fuerza que fomenta la guerra de culturas en la iglesia, se ha convertido en una fuerza destructura, una ideología de la cual el evangelio nos ofrece la libertad. Todas las culturas no son más que fábricas de utensillos que facilitan la expresión y la comunicación de lo que somos como cristianos. De por sí, una cultura sólo provee el contexto para la identidad, y como tal cualquiera de ellas puede suplir las necesidades de los cristianos. El Cristo resucitado vive en todas las culturas y transforma a todas las culturas para que puedan ser vehículos efectivos del propósito divino de dar vida eterna. Si el nacionalismo de un grupo dentro de una iglesia compuesta de muchas nacionalidades absolutiza una versión nacionalista del evangelio, o le da al evangelio la versión cultural que tenía en aquel pasado añorado en el país de origen, está forjando una versión del evangelio distorcionada. Una cosa es el derecho a la identidad y a la cultura que le dan medios de expresión a la vida. Otra es el poder del evangelio para transformar la vida de esta tierra en vida eterna.

Cuando el evangelio de Cristo es nacionalizado y se convierte en un arma cultural para gobernar, deja de ser evangelio de libertad *para* la salvación. Pablo llevó a cabo el proceso contrario al desnacionalizar al cristianismo para que pueda funcionar como agente de libertad transformadora por el poder escatológico de la Nueva Creación del Cristo resucitado. El evangelio no puede ser usado como arma imperialista, ya sea un imperialismo basado en la naturaleza o en la cultura, y menos aún un imperialismo cristiano que contrapone culturas. El evangelio, al contrario, debe ser el poder que libera a los cristianos del imperialismo que fuere.

Summary

Paul had to struggle with issues of nationalism in ways similar to those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to the author, Paul's most important legacy in this respect was that he denationalized his understanding of both freedom and salvation. Paul, however, did not follow the lead of modernity, declaring nationalism to be an illusion. Rather, he stressed the New Creation in Christ which brings all humankind together. Thus, while Romanticism's denationalization is individualistic, Paul's is communitarian.

Part of the consequence of this is that a purist sense of nationhood can never lead to true freedom, for freedom is inclusive. Likewise, freedom is never found in a return to an idealized past, for freedom is always God's eschatological promise.

This is followed by a series of considerations of its implications for Hispanic-Americans, who often belong both to this nation and to their country of origin.

Seeking Peace, "With Justice and Dignity": The People's Struggle in Chiapas, Mexico¹

Gonzalo Castillo-Cárdenas

The motto "Justice and Dignity" appears in most letters and "comunicados" of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). The two concepts figure explicitly or by implication in almost every page of these documents which already form a substantial corpus.² Rich in content and inspiration the values of "justice and dignity" are the ethical core of the native peoples' spirituality forged in a long struggle to preserve life with decency through resistance to conquest, dehumanization and death.

Wealth and Misery

With its 73,887 sq. kms. and 3.4 million people, the Mexican State of Chiapas is 25% larger than Costa Rica; over three times larger, although much less populated, than El Salvador, and two thirds the size of Guatemala, although only with one third of its population. Chiapas is also blessed by great natural wealth. Thirty percent of all the territorial water of Mexico runs in Chiapas, generating 55% of all hydro-electric energy used by the nation. PEMEX, the Federal Agency that controls Mexican petroleum, drills 92,000 barrels of petroleum per day, and 516 billion cubic feet of natural gas every year. However, only 57% of the people of Chiapas enjoy running water, and over 30% of living quarters lack electricity, of which one third have to resort to "leña o carbón" (wood or vegetable coal) as the only source of energy.

Half of the territory of Chiapas is forests, including the famous "Selva Lacandona", one of the most valuable biological reserves in the world, because of its precious woods and biological diversity. However, in the last three decades 30% of its trees have been lost to the logging industry or to domestic use, at a faster rhythm of deforestation than in the Amazon basin.

¹ This is a report of an observation visit to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, for three weeks in April, 1995. I am deeply thankful to my good friends Charles and Harriet Goff, of the Cemanahuac Educational Community in Cuernavaca, Mor., Mexico and to Flora Guerrero, Charles' wife, who made the contacts for me in Chiapas, and provided generous hospitality; also to Rev. José Luis Velazco, of the Presbyterian Church of Mexico, an old friend who did the contacts with the Protestant community. Travel expenses were provided through a small grant from the Faculty Development Fund of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, for which I am very grateful.

² A complete collection has been published by Ediciones Era, Colección Problemas de México, titled *EZLN, Documentos y Comunicados*, covering the period from January 1, to August 8, of 1994.

The greatest wealth of the region is its people, 35% of whom are Indians speaking 18 different languages of the Maya linguistic family, specially Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolabal, Chol and Lacandon. But this immense human potential has also been impacted by exploitation and oppression causing malnutrition and endemic diseases, like tuberculosis, dysentery, typhus and malaria, which although curable still are the principal cause of early death of thousands per year. Thus, in the midst of immense wealth most of the population is the victim of artificial poverty, social marginality, and political oppression. Of the 854,159 people who are employed in Chiapas, 59% receive the minimum wage, or less, and another 18% receives less than two minimum salaries (minimum salary being the equivalent of \$4.00 U.S. dollars a day). In contrast, 1.3% (11,231 persons) get over 10 minimum salaries. Illiteracy in Chiapas is three times the national average for people over 15 years of age, of whom only 1.12% finish high school.³

Although Chiapas occupies the first place in the nation in coffee production, the second in cattle raising, and the third in corn, its population ranks close to the top in malnutrition and hunger. During the last six years when the Mexican government has followed a vigorous and highly publicized "neoliberal" development policy towards "modernization", the human condition in Chiapas has remained desperate.

Burdened and heavy laden

If statistics are insufficient, even a short exposure to daily life will add significantly to our ability to comprehend the true reality of Chiapas. One of the images that may help interpret the rebellion, for example, is the sight of small Indian women and children carrying on their backs huge bunches of sticks and branches of various lengths tightly tied together with rope forming a "carga de leña" (a load of wood) weighing from twenty to thirty kilos. "Leña" is the only source of energy that most peasants have access to. The "cargas" are suspended by a burlap strap or "cabestro" (halter) strung around their heads. To better support the loads, women and children bend their backs forward and stiffen their necks as hard as they can as they walk along the roads to their hearths. With time, the straps form a slight depression around the top of the skull according to the width of the "cabestros", which can be felt with the finger tips, when they caress each other in intimate moments of love and relaxation. Reminiscent of the old image, drawn or painted many times in the chronicles of the colonial period depicting Indians transporting on their backs the bodies of conquistadores, developers, political authorities or missionaries, the image of the heavy laden Indian continues to be the most striking as one visits Chiapas today.

3 Data of The National Institute of Statistics, INEGI, Census of 1990.

For the Mexican upper class, especially those who promote today the NAFTA Association and take pride in calling themselves part of "the first world", this image is embarrassing, if not distorting of reality, which they consider firmly established in the urban, industrial and modern world. But for 80% of the Mexican population the heavy laden women and children of the Mexican countryside reveal not only the continuity but also the most characteristic feature of reality, not only the Indian's, but also their own. The Mexican poor, the unemployed, the working poor, the small bureaucrat, see themselves like the Indian carrying the heavy loads of "progress", thus paying the tribute that continues to be exacted from the Mexican economy by the conquistadors of today.

"Take a mirror and see yourselves", has written the Sub-Commander Marcos, the visible head of the rebellion, in one of the editorials of "the Mexican Alarm Clock".⁴

El Despertador Mejicano (The Mexican Alarm Clock)

The conditions of injustice and indignity that prevail in Chiapas help explain and legitimize the people's uprising that flared up on January 1, 1994. On that day the Zapatista Army (EZLN) made its first public display of force, taking over for several hours the head towns of four municipalities including the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, the old capital of Chiapas, and announcing its "declaration of war" on the Mexican government. The document released that day by the EZLN made it clear that such an insurgent war was *just* according to traditional ethical criteria or just war theory: war was "the only last hope" after having exhausted all legal means; the President Salinas de Gortari, "the maximum but illegitimate chief," was declared a "dictator;" the right of "the people" to "alter or modify its form of government" (recognized in the Mexican Constitution Art.39), was quoted in the declaration); and the ultimate purpose of restoring "legality" and "legitimacy" by establishing greater justice and dignity was proclaimed as the goal of the rebellion.⁵ The shock waves that were felt all over the world partly because the date coincided with the first day of implementation of the NAFTA agreement, were felt even more strongly throughout the Mexican territory. Like an immense alarm clock of historic proportions, the Chiapas rebellion had sounded the wake up call to the masses of Mexican poor who have slumbered for too long with the lullabies composed and sung by the ruling elites using the rhetoric of the Mexican revolution. Despite its limited military strength and because of its vast social and ethical content the uprising has been able to precipitate a "crisis" that had been brewing for a long time and which could not be ignored anymore. The dynamics behind the conflict has three levels.

⁴ *El Despertador Mejicano*, the occasional newspaper of the EZLN.

⁵ The full text of the "declaration" is found in *EZLN: Documentos y Comunicados*, pp. 33-35.

The first is the level of consciousness that has increased notably among the Indians. Economic and sociological factors have contributed to this as significant numbers have been forced to become seasonal laborers in neighboring coffee and sugar plantations, thus enlarging their understanding of the economic connections behind their suffering, and establishing links with plantation laborers and urban poor, both mestizo and ladino, and with their leaders. But, even more important has been the religious factor. Since the early 60's when Archbishop Méndez Arceo of Cuernavaca initiated a campaign to make the Bible accessible to the common people, through the influence of the second Vatican Council and of liberation theology with its "option for the poor", to the present identification of the dioceses of Chiapas and of its bishop, Samuel Ruiz, with the defense of human rights, the influence of religion has taken a progressive and even a liberationist direction. Bishop Ruiz is widely recognized nationally and internationally as a champion of human rights and of the integrity of Indian communities. Through his leadership as Director of the Center of Human Rights, "Fray Bartotomé de las Casas" (CDHFBC) and President of the National Negotiating Commission (CONAI), the bishop has become a strong force in the wider civil society.

Secondly, and more importantly, the organizational level has increased considerably since the 1970's. The first Indian Congress, convened in 1974 by Bishop Samuel Ruiz, became the seedbed of a multitude of organizations, having as common denominator the Indian social base, and the human condition of the Indian and the poor. Today there are 280 organizations affiliated to CEDIC, the State level Council of Indians and Peasants. Despite their great diversity of perspectives and program emphases, the central issues of justice and dignity give unity to them all, emphasizing agrarian policy, land, respect for individual and communal human rights, cleansing of corrupt officials, transparent elections, just prices for their products, and public services, such as running water, electricity, schools, health care, sanitation, roads, etc. This upsurge of organizations "from below" parallels, and to a certain extent, reflects the increased level of organized repression from the top, as rich ranchers, landowners, plantation owners (sugar and coffee), have organized private armies known as "guardias blancas" which although clandestine and illegal, operate freely throughout Chiapas.

The third level is the clash of increasing expectations and strong social momentum of people's demands, specially the Indians', with their total rejection by the powerful. This is how the Indian communities, for example, interpreted the NAFTA agreement, and the entire "neo-liberal" project imposed by the Salinas administration in favor of international capital. This clash produces the Chiapas conflict.

For the natives of Chiapas, like for most of the world's poor, the

globalization of the economy is a disaster that has already happened. With the ability of transnational corporations to relocate their plants around the world, the global economy forces all workers, communities and nations to become competitors for the corporation's favors; and as governments wish to attract investments they also seek to pulverize ethnic communities that persist in their traditional economies, thus making their members available to the requirements of capital, especially, cheap labor. This explains why the Chiapas poor, especially the Indian communities, have regarded the NAFTA agreement as their own sentence of death. During 1993, when the agreement was being negotiated, the Salinas administration used the power of the state to break down the institutional protection of the native communities (Article 27 of the Constitution) in preparation for the entry of the country to the NAFTA club. Through its total control of the Senate, the government approved a constitutional revision that prohibited further expropriation of large landholdings under the agrarian reform laws while allowing for the breakup and sale of "ejidos", the peasants agricultural cooperative farms. Thus, one of the key achievements of the Mexican revolution was sacrificed at the altar of the "New Economic Order", and the plight of Indian peasants all over the country was made more precarious than ever.

Militarization of Chiapas

After the initial attempt to wipe out the rebels through a massive show of military might, the Federal government has come to its senses agreeing to a political and negotiated solution, a process that has dragged on for over a year and a half.⁶ In the meantime, the Federal Army and other security forces carry on a parallel strategy taken from the textbooks of counter insurgency training at the School of the Americas, of which the three generals in charge of the Chiapas operations are graduates.⁷ It is known as "low intensity conflict" strategy, successfully applied in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, containing a well structured war plan whose specific target is the civil population. It involves the careful management of the "image of the army" making it appear as friendly, giving public concerts, carrying on social service activities, passing out candies to children, and food to the communities. An international delegation of Greenpeace, visiting the area in February of 1995, reported how this military strategy was being implemented in the Altos de Chiapas and the Selva Lacandona, the principal

6 Although the "hot" stage of the military confrontation lasted only a few weeks, immediately after the insurrection (January-February, 1994), it left between 600 and 800 dead among Indian peasants of the area. The negotiations announced by the parties on February 23, 1994 have taken over a year to begin. The first official meeting between the parties to agree on site, agenda, and protocol preliminary to the negotiations took place on Sunday, April 9 (Palm Sunday) of 1995, while I was visiting San Cristóbal. The meetings took place in Ocosingo, twenty kilometers from San Cristóbal. Formal negotiations started on April 20, and still continue for an indefinite period.

7 See *Proceso*, No. 961, April 3, 1995, pp. 26-27.

centers of rebel activity and support. The report emphasizes that as a non-conventional form of warfare the "low intensity conflict" strategy is carried out in conditions in which violent confrontation is not taking place, with the evident intention of defeating the EZLN by taking control of the civil population and its resources, thus cutting off the guerrilla from its support base, realizing that the civil population is to the guerrilla as water is to the fish. Sporadic although systematic violation of human rights is an integral part of this strategy: the sudden search of a peasant home, another peasant leader tortured, a young woman raped, another local leader "disappeared", a sudden take-over of a certain village. The fact that these violations are not generalized permits the management of public opinion making them appear as isolated cases, "excesses" or "abuses" to be investigated. The timing of the operations is also carefully considered. In the Altos de Chiapas, for example, military penetration took place precisely in the critical weeks when the peasants were preparing their plots for planting beans and coffee, the staples of their diet. In some cases, the meager food reserves were destroyed or spread with insecticide. The end result was to leave the entire population dependent for their survival on food distributions by the army. In some cases, even the water tanks were contaminated with petroleum.⁸ Thus, the "low intensity conflict" strategy in fact intensifies the prevalent human rights crisis which the poor, specially the Indian population of Chiapas has suffered for many years.⁹

A Society "with room for everyone"

Different to most Latin American guerrilla wars of the cold war period, the Chiapas rebellion, whose social base is formed mostly of Indians and small farmers or *campesinos*, does not aim in the first instance to take over the power of the state, but to achieve respect ("reconocimiento"), the end of contempt and exclusion, and to be recognized as interlocutors in the discourse about the conditions of their life. It is the search for a sustainable Mexican society "with room for everyone", where the "little ones" are guaranteed the right to speak "the truthful word" and to be heard and taken into account. A community of life gathering the traditions of a people experienced in suffering, yearning for equality and justice, and the ancestral democratic structures real or imagined, nourished

8 A summary of the Greenpeace Report was published by *Proceso*, No. 962, April 10, 1995.

9 The examination of these endemic conditions has been the task of the Center for the Defense of Human Rights, founded by Bishop Ruiz in 1989. The Center published a report, covering the second semester of 1993 through 1994, on the human rights situation in the territory of the dioceses of San Cristóbal which includes the entire area of the conflict. The report documents four kinds of violations: 1) crimes against the integrity of persons and their possessions (expropriations, torture, cruel and degrading treatment, etc.); 2) violations of personal liberty (expulsions, arbitrary detention, etc.); 3) violations of personal security (actions intended to create fear, uncertainty and panic directed towards individuals or groups, such as death threats, beatings, arbitrary searches, and 4) violations committed through the discharge of official duties by the authorities (i.e., abuse of authority, negligence and impunity).

with the ideal of communal democracy internalized and reinterpreted by the majority of the rural population in their innumerable organizations based on dialogue, consensus, continuous consultation and persistent vigilance of natural leaders through communal assemblies, what the Tzeltal Indians call "wojk ta wojk" ("to throw and gather the word").¹⁰

Every struggle for "dignity and justice" is frail and uncertain. Its outcome is linked, and to a large extent depends on structural changes in the economic, social, political and cultural fields, which threaten recalcitrant habits, established forms, and vested interests, and in the case of the present Mexican crisis, the interests represented by the programs generated by the NAFTA agreement.

The leaders of the Chiapas rebellion are very aware of this as indicated by the fact that the denunciation of that agreement as an imposition from the top is a central feature in EZLN's platform. This realism about the complexity of the issues is also the reason why the EZLN does not see itself as a pressure group, but as the militant conscience of the entire "civil society", which the Zapatistas conceive as composed of all the forms in which the people of Mexico is organized, and which they challenge to speak and to hear "the truthful word" of their own reality and vision.¹¹

Resumen

En el presente artículo el Prof. Castillo-Cárdenas informa sobre su visita al estado de Chiapas, en Méjico, donde pudo observar la injusticia que se comete contra los nativos del lugar. Su propósito en este informe es hacernos ver que la realidad de nuestros países no es la que nos describen los diarios y demás medios de comunicación, y que muchas veces las personas de más elevada clase social imaginan ser toda la realidad. Como cristianos hispanos, esa "otra" realidad de Chiapas y de tantos otros lugares es el contexto de nuestro ministerio y de nuestra reflexión teológica.

10 According to Antonio García de León's interpretation. See *EZLN: Documentos y Comunicados*, Introducción, p. 20.

11 The EZLN has emphasized the inclusive concept of "civil society" as the historical subject of change, insisting that the movement does not represent only an ethnic community, or a social class, but "all the Mexican people," organized in a multitude of forms. This vision has stimulated various mobilizations of "the civil society" in response to the EZLN's challenge. The first National Dialogue of Civil Society took place in Chiapas on March 29, 1995; the second "Dialogue" is being convened for June 8-9 of 1995 in Mexico City with international participation of human rights and other organizations.

Hispanic Theology and the Apocalyptic Imagination

C. Gilbert Romero

If the truth be told, the Enlightenment has masterfully deceived Western civilization. With its unflagging emphasis on the validating significance of the rational approach to reality, it left virtually no room for the emotions or the imagination. This meant, of course, that logic was to be considered far superior to instinct, and thinking credited with being more valid than feeling. The result was a sort of top-heavy left brain (rational) approach that was, in effect, a stunted and biased view of reality itself. In recent years, however, attempts at a corrective have been made with regard to giving the right brain (emotion/imagination) its due. The consensus now seems to be that we are creatures not just of reason (the left brain), but of emotion and imagination (the right brain) as well. Both have equal validity in our constructions of reality.

Just how important a victory is it to have the imagination given equal billing with rationality in constructing reality? If one considers the long history of neglect and derision given imagination together with emotion, it is an important victory indeed. As Berger and Luckmann remind us, all reality is constructed socially. That is to say, our approach to reality has a social milieu that affects our perception of it. It is a given datum that patriarchal paradigms have governed our way of life in the West which includes even our way of perceiving reality. So much so that rationality as the dominant male approach in dealing with the world became normative. Emotion, intuition, and by inference imagination, were considered female characteristics, therefore weak and unsuitable for understanding and dealing with the world, consequently to be jettisoned in favor of the more "valid" male rationality.

Along with the gender bias against emotion and imagination as valid norms for constructing reality, there has been in modern society a cultural bias as well. That is to say, any culture that tended to favor emotion and imagination over rationality as a way of constructing reality was characterized as "feminine," therefore weak and unsuitable for constructing reality in a dominantly male world. Since for the last two centuries in the U.S. the dominant culture has been WASPish and heavily patriarchal, the Latino culture, which generally tends to favor emotion and imagination over rationality in the construction of reality, has been given at best a second class status. So, the need to recognize the significance of the right brain and, therefore, of emotion and imagination as valid interpreters

of reality have also affected Latino culture as well. This is more readily apparent in the realm of religion, and specifically in the area of devotional piety.

In the Latino culture, devotional piety, often called *religiosidad popular*, seeks its principal expression of relating to the transcendent through emotion and imagination which is reflected in imagery and symbolism. One of the ways in which *religiosidad popular* achieves its theological validation is through its connection with the Bible which itself is replete with images and symbols as a way of explaining reality. Thus, if we are to understand the Latino culture's approach to reality, particularly in the religious realm, it is imperative that we examine more closely the relationship between *religiosidad popular* and the Bible.

In the emerging discipline of Hispanic theology in the U.S. there is a general consensus that *religiosidad popular* is a valid locus for doing theology. This means that theologizing from the Hispanic perspective must take into account the significance and implications of religious experience as imaged through devotional practices in their relationship with the Bible. In order to understand more clearly this dynamic it will be helpful to examine a biblical category that resonates well with the Hispanic temperament not only because of its heightened use of the imagination, but also because of its extensive employment of symbolism. That biblical category is the genre of apocalyptic.

What is apocalyptic? How does one recognize it? On one level the movies of Arnold Schwarzenegger are popularly considered apocalyptic because they provide graphic images of total destruction. But because not much is left to the imagination this is not to be considered apocalyptic in the true sense of the word. Rather, apocalyptic in the biblical context is a special genre of literature characterized principally by a future orientation of a present historical reality shifted onto the cosmic plane and described symbolically. There is a great deal of imagination involved here, especially in attempting to describe the reality to the "faithful." Apocalyptic is a specific type of literature for a specific situation in history.

Biblical apocalyptic is generally believed to have flourished, more or less, from about the second century B.C.E. to about the second century C.E. with immediate antecedents in the postexilic prophetic movements of a few centuries earlier. The period of apocalyptic's germination is, for the most part, a period of conflictual history for the Jewish people. It was a time of marginalization and oppression by the dominant powers of Greece and Rome and their ideological adherents. In effect, the social construction of Israel's postexilic reality led to the emergence of apocalyptic as a way of coming to grips with that marginalization and perceived oppression.

The world of apocalyptic is, above all, a world of symbolism. That is to say that for the postexilic Jews the experience of marginalization left them with feelings of powerlessness regarding the present time. Any hope of victory was projected into the future, or the "end time" when the Lord Yahweh would intervene definitively on their behalf. Consider the powerful images in the canonical books of Daniel and Revelation. However, the courage to sustain hope in the future victory and the patience to endure the painful present was combined and nourished in that twilight zone which we may refer to as the "between time." This dynamic zone of hope-filled activity is comparable to what Hans Gadamer referred to as the "fusion of horizons," namely, fusing the horizon of the present with the horizon of the future.

The "between time," or what Ernst Bloch refers to as the "not yet," is the arena of human hope-filled activity where the future breaks into the present in order to make sense out of it. This arena of activity, the "between time," is the world of symbolism, and the principal dynamic of activation is the imagination. In other words, it is the imagination that attempts to fuse the world of the present historical tension with the world of future resolution of that tension. The fusion becomes possible when the symbolic world of the "between time" lends itself to the interpretation of a specific meaning of a particular symbol at a definite point in time. This possibility is realized hermeneutically because all symbols have a "semantic field" surrounding them somewhat like the magnetic field surrounding certain metals. That is to say that by nature a symbol is polyvalent, capable of multiple interpretations.

Thus when I speak of "apocalyptic imagination" I speak of a present historical experience of marginalization/oppression which becomes a hope-filled experience through symbolization. The situation of tension seeking resolution is the "between time" and the catalyst of symbolization is the imagination.

For example, one can look to the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and see various examples of the reinterpretation of a symbol/passage. In fact, it may be said that with regard to the relationship between the testaments, the Christian scriptures offer a reinterpretation of the motifs, symbols, and images of the Hebrew scriptures in their attempt to explain the meaning of Jesus Christ.

A specific illustration of the "apocalyptic imagination" at work is Matthew's reinterpretation of Hosea's "Out of Egypt I have called my son" passage (Matt 2:15 and Hos 11:1). This passage illustrates well how Matthew and Hosea at different points in history demonstrate the saving power of God with regard to God's "son."

"Salvation-of-the-son-by-the-father" was the symbol utilized by both Hosea and Matthew at different historical moments. The semantic field surrounding that symbol enabled Hosea in the 8th century B.C.E. to appropriate it for his present situation by referring to Yahweh delivering Israel (Yahweh's "son" in Hoseanic language) out of slavery in Egypt through the Exodus in about the middle of the 13th century B.C.E. Yahweh had saved his "son" Israel in the past and he will do so again. The threat of Israel's impending doom due to her destructive behavior in Hosea's time provided the situation of tension for the prophet. By appropriating the Exodus motif via his imaginative use of the "salvation-of-the-son-by-the-father" symbol, Hosea moved his religious discourse into the hope-filled arena of the "between time" and thus employed apocalyptic imagination.

Matthew, on the other hand, appropriated the same symbol and reinterpreted it to suit a changed historical situation of conflict, namely, Jesus' delivery from the maleficent intent of Herod. Now that Herod was dead Joseph received word in a dream to leave Egypt. Thus Matthew, by directly quoting Hosea, plugs into the same semantic field of "salvation-of-the-son-by-the-father" symbol. However, both his subject and historical situation were different. The situation of tense historical conflict was the threat to the "son's" (Jesus) life by Herod. This tension seeking resolution in Matthew's eyes is the "between time." By imaginative reinterpretation of the Hoseanic symbol, Matthew was able to declare that Yahweh had, indeed, once again saved his "son," and thus provided hope for Matthew's present community as other "sons" of God. And so we have a Matthean exercise in apocalyptic imagination.

How does this relate to Hispanic theology? First of all, it is my personal conviction that one of the principal resources for a Hispanic theology in the U.S. is devotional piety (*religiosidad popular*). As a result, Hispanic devotional piety provides a broad framework for a solid theological investigation which includes postulating the use of an apocalyptic imagination.

Secondly, based on the above analogy with the Bible, theological reflection on Hispanic devotional piety may be said to include an apocalyptic imagination principally for two reasons: first, the exercise of Hispanic devotional piety can be considered as the "between time"; and second, its constitutive function is symbolic interpretation through the use of the imagination.

We may refer to the "between time" of Hispanic devotional piety as the *entretiempo*. For it is generally in moments of present historical tension, when there is need for the resolution of a problem, that the devotee enters into the hope-filled arena of a particular practice, for example the home altar rogationary prayer or something similar. The activation of the hope for resolution occurs with the imaginative use of the particular devotion's symbolic world. Because of the

polysemic nature of symbols, the devotee generally tends to reappropriate a symbol for personal meaning.

As in the case of Matthew reappropriating a Hoseanic symbol from the imaged world of scripture, so can the devotee reappropriate a symbol from the same imaged world of scripture within the framework of a particular devotion. For example, the home altar devotion, resorted to for the resolution of a problem, may yield the biblical symbol of "covenant" based on the Sinaitic model of bi-lateralism and conditionality. Achieving this would be an exercise of the apocalyptic imagination.

As further testimony to the potentially fruitful relationship between Hispanic theology in the U.S. and the employment of an apocalyptic imagination in the understanding of devotional piety, I would suggest the methodology of reader-response criticism whenever the Bible is used as resource. This methodology is quite open to the realities of the *entretiempo* and a symbolic hermeneutic. It certainly would provide a refreshing alternative to the positivist limits of the historical-critical method and enable a better understanding of scripture in one's personal life, at least from a Hispanic devotional piety perspective. In sum, I think it is high time that we pay more attention to our right brain when doing theology.

Resumen

La fascinación con la tecnología moderna le ha permitido a buena parte de la civilización occidental caer en la trampa de creer que la racionalidad y la lógica son por definición superiores a la intuición y la imaginación como árbitros de la verdad y de la construcción de la realidad. El prejuicio de género y de cultura ha polarizado lo que se debe ver como complementario. La apocalíptica es la categoría bíblica más apropiada para la interpretación simbólica de las escrituras mediante la imaginación. En lo cultural, la devoción popular hispana llena los criterios de la imaginación apocalíptica como intérprete válido. Un ejemplo del empleo de la imaginación apocalíptica para reinterpretar un texto lo tenemos en el modo en que Mateo 2:15 lee a Oseas 11:1.

A Biblical and Theological Reflection on Faith Communities: Eleven Characteristics of the Early Faith Communities

Roberto L. Gómez

During the 1988-1992 quadrennium, a task force on Hispanic ministry of the United Methodist Church developed a national plan for doing ministry with Hispanic communities. The national plan was approved by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in May 1992. A crucial strategy in the plan calls for the development of "faith communities."

The National Plan for Hispanic Ministry presents the following vision of faith communities:

It focuses primarily on a model of lay and clergy partnership patterned after the traditional Methodist class system and its circuit riders. This ministry is primarily the work of a corps of lay missionaries for Hispanic Ministry, in partnership with the ordained ministry of the church, and normally working as missional teams. They start new faith communities in a variety of settings, revitalize existing congregations, and work in the development and support of community ministries.

From the very outset, it is expected that each of these faith communities will gather for the worship of God and the study of Scripture, for prayer, and to seek God's will for them in their setting. They will promote full congregational development by sharing their faith, inviting others to follow the Lord, and by seeking ways to be involved in whatever forms of ministry and advocacy for justice the Lord requires in the communities. They will understand themselves as centers for evangelism, mission action, and mission training, both at the local level and globally. From the outset, these faith communities will understand that stewardship is crucial to Christian discipleship, and will be encouraged to contribute financially to their own support as well as to the total mission of the church. These groups will be organically related to existing charges (both Hispanic and others) until such a time as they may develop into congregations, or join other similar groups to form a new congregation.

As a member of the National Committee for Hispanic Ministry and as a member of the subcommittee on congregational development, I am aware of the difficulty in defining what is a faith community. There is a spirited debate on what a faith community is or is not and what it does and does not do. This debate encouraged me to suggest that a point of reference, the first faith communities of Christianity, is helpful in defining what is a faith community.

My biblical and theological reflection on what is a faith community continues the discussion about faith communities started by the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry of the United Methodist Church. My primary resource for this exploration is the New Testament, more specifically the four Gospels, the book of Acts and Paul's letters. My intention is to offer a standard or a profile to

distinguish a faith community from other communities, religious and secular. The early Christian faith communities had characteristics that can serve as a criterion for defining faith communities.

Eleven identifiable characteristics of faith communities are found in the New Testament. These eleven characteristics show the positive side of the early faith communities as contrasted with other characteristics that show a negative aspect of the early faith communities.

First, the early faith communities had a memory or a historical consciousness. Two biblical passages attest to the historical consciousness: Acts 2:14-36 and Romans 4:1--6:11. Other New Testament passages also illustrate the historical consciousness of the early faith communities. The participants in the first faith communities remembered that God created the world, that God called Abraham and Sarah, and that through Moses, God liberated the Hebrew people from slavery and oppression in Egypt. The early faith communities remembered God's actions through the judges and the kings who ruled over the Hebrew people. The early faith communities remembered God's message through the prophets who called for loyalty to God and justice for the poor, the widows, and the orphans. The early Christian communities especially remembered Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, as the Christ. The first faith communities remembered that Jesus lived in a certain place and ministered to specific persons. The early faith communities remembered that Jesus preached, taught, and healed. The early faith communities remembered that Jesus was crucified, died, was buried, and resurrected. The faith community has a memory and it remembers God's loving action in the biblical witness and in the continuing ministry of the Risen Christ.

A second characteristic of the early faith communities was forgiveness. Several narratives of Jesus' life and ministry show the importance of the forgiveness motif for the early faith communities (the Zacchaeus story in Luke 19:1-9, the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11, and Jesus' response to the persons who crucified him in Luke 23:32-34). The narrative in John 20:19-23 illustrates how the resurrected Jesus appeared with forgiveness and blessing to the disciples who had abandoned him during his arrest and subsequent crucifixion. John 20:23a has Jesus telling his disciples, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them." The narratives (John 20:19-23 and Acts 10:1--11:18) of the forgiveness the Disciple Peter experienced demonstrate that the early Christian community was a forgiving one. For a person seeking to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of his or her thoughts, intentions, and actions that caused hurt, alienation, oppression, and death meant a restoration of life, a new opportunity, and a new start. The faith community is a forgiving community of forgiven people.

A third characteristic of the early faith communities was celebration. The early faith communities experienced God's grace in Jesus Christ. Many but not all of the first Christians were marginalized persons: the poor, the sick, the outcasts, and the foreigners. As marginalized persons heard and understood that God included them in his kingdom, they celebrated. The first Christians responded

joyfully to the love of God they experienced in the Risen Christ. The early faith communities celebrated joyfully the presence of the Risen Christ in worship, in study, in prayer, and in service (John 20:19-23, John 21), but especially in the "breaking of bread" (I Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26). The joyful celebrations of the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism in accordance to the official practice of the established church mark faith communities as part of the apostolic tradition (Acts 16:14-15; Galatians 3:27).

A fourth characteristic of the early faith communities was the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13; 10:44-48). The early faith communities were open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bound together the diverse people of the first faith communities. The Holy Spirit energized and drove the early faith communities in their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. Leaders of the early faith communities were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-25). The Holy Spirit consoled and comforted the faith communities in times of trial, of persecution, and of need. The Holy Spirit provided the breath of life for the early faith communities. The breath of life given by the Holy Spirit kept the early faith communities alive in face of numerous challenges and threats. The Holy Spirit gave the early faith communities a spirit of spontaneity that enabled early Christians to seize moments of opportunity for witnessing and serving in the name of Jesus Christ. The faith community is a community infused by the Holy Spirit.

A fifth characteristic of the early faith communities was the bold proclamation of the good news according to Jesus and faithful witness to the immediate faith community and to those outside the faith community. Acts 10:34-43 demonstrates this characteristic. Proclaiming the good news by witnessing was a major driving force for the early Christian faith communities. At times proclamation and witnessing were successful as receptive persons, families, and communities responded to the Gospel. In other occasions, reaction to the proclamation of the Gospel and to witnessing was harsh. Some Jewish Zealots persecuted the first Christians (Acts 8:1-3; 17:1-15). Occasionally, gentiles reacted violently to early Christian efforts. By the end of the first century officials of the Roman Empire sporadically persecuted Christians. At times the early Christians were attacked and killed by angry mobs or imprisoned, tortured, and put to death by the civil authorities. Early Christians who lost their life while proclaiming the good news according to Jesus became the first martyrs of the faith. The faith community is a community of bold proclamation and faithful witness.

Teaching about Jesus and his gospel was a sixth characteristic of the early faith communities. The early faith communities taught about Jesus' sayings and life. The focus was not on facts but on the meaning of Jesus' teachings and his life for us (Acts 8:26-49). The early faith communities had three sources for teaching.

The first source was the apostolic oral tradition that told the story of Jesus: the beginning of his ministry, the call of the disciples, his teachings, his

preaching, his sermons, his miracles, his important relationships, and his arrest, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Beginning with the Gospel of Mark around 70 A. D., the apostolic oral tradition was put into writing.

The second source used by the early faith communities was the Holy Scripture used by the Jewish people. It was during the development of the first faith communities that Jewish religious authorities canonized their holy scripture that we now call the Old Testament. The Jewish holy scripture provided an important biblical and theological base for teaching for the early Christian faith communities.

The third source for teaching used by early Christian faith communities was Paul's letters which begun in the late 40's A. D., less than 20 years after Jesus' death. Paul accomplished several crucial things through the letters he sent to the early faith communities. He interpreted what God had done in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:31-39). He provided a vision for the early faith communities as communities gathered around the crucified and resurrected Christ (I Corinthians 2:1-5). He called for discipline among the faithful (I Corinthians 1:10-17). He provided structure for the early faith communities. He supervised the leaders of the early faith communities (II Corinthians 12:11-21). He asked for help for the weaker faith communities and praised the stronger faith communities (Acts 9; II Corinthians 9). Through his personal visits and through his letters, Paul provided a sense of connectedness for the early faith communities even though the communities were widely scattered across the Roman Empire. The faith community is a teaching community.

A seventh characteristic of the early faith communities was serving in the spirit of Jesus Christ. The first faith communities remembered Jesus as a compassionate leader who served the needy by providing for the poor, the sick, the widows, the orphans, and the foreigners (Matthew 14:13-21). Jesus was faithful to the prophets' emphasis of justice and welfare for all people. In the spirit of Christ the early faith communities developed a ministry of serving the needy (Acts 6:1-6; II Corinthians 9; James 2:14-17). The faith community, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, serves the needy.

Healing was an eighth characteristic of the early faith communities. The Gospels clearly testify about Jesus' healing ministry of body, mind, and spirit. The apostles continued Jesus' ministry of healing (Acts 3:1-11; 9:36-43). Paul and his colleagues had a Christ-centered ministry of healing (Acts 14:8-10). Healing occurs in the faith community through the presence of the Risen Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The faith community is a community of healing in which there is a healing of body, mind, and spirit.

A ninth characteristic of the early faith communities was inclusiveness. Jesus himself modeled a faith community of growing inclusiveness. The early faith communities were new families of faith open to many languages, open to many ethnic groups, open to diverse races, open to both genders, and cutting across social and economic class lines (Acts 2:5-13; Romans 10:5-13; 16:1-6). The

Resurrected Christ was for all people everywhere (Acts 10:44-48). Leadership in the first Christian faith communities came from Jews and Gentiles, men and women, and free persons and slaves. Some early faith communities were heterogeneous while others were homogeneous. Their composition often depended on their geography. The faith community is an inclusive community.

The tenth characteristic of the early faith communities was connectedness or catholicity. Geography, language, nationalities, and other factors isolated the early faith communities (Acts 11:19). However, Paul and other early Christian leaders quickly developed and maintained a network, a connectedness, for the first Christian communities. The oral apostolic tradition and Paul's letters did much to forge a biblical, theological, and historical sense of connectedness, a catholic spirit, in which all the faith communities worshipped and served Jesus Christ. The Eucharist celebration became and remains a point of connectedness and unity for Christians. The faith community is catholic in spirit.

Hope was an eleventh characteristic of the early faith communities. The early faith communities were keenly aware of the passing of the old order and the moving into a new age under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Revelation). Although the early faith communities experienced suffering and persecution, there was a strong sense of hope of a new kingdom, a new Israel, a new Jerusalem (Revelation 21) in which peace and justice would prevail. The hope in the sovereignty of Jesus Christ brought personal and social liberation (Philemon 8-21). The faith community is a community of hope.

There may be other characteristics of the early faith communities. However, these eleven characteristics of the early faith communities provide a biblical and theological standard by which to measure the faithfulness, the vitality, and the effectiveness of faith communities according to the vision of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry and similar plans of other denominations. An appropriate development of faith communities faithful to the vision of faith communities in the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry will depend upon the receptiveness of pastors and lay missionaries to the New Testament standard of faith communities.

Resumen

Reflexionando sobre el tema de las "comunidades de fe", que forman parte esencial del Plan Nacional Hispano de la Iglesia Metodista Unida, el autor estudia once características de las primeras comunidades de fe, tal como se describen en el Nuevo Testamento. Su propósito explícito es aclarar el sentido del término mismo, "comunidad de fe"; pero también se vislumbra el propósito de proveer una guía a estas nuevas comunidades que dicho Plan Nacional se propone fomentar y nutrir.

El

Programa Hispano de Verano

anuncia su
octava sesión
en los terrenos de
Brite Divinity School
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas
del 22 de junio al 5 de julio de 1996

Se ofrecerán los siguientes cursos:

Buscad la paz de la ciudad: Teología y ética para el ministerio urbano,
por el Dr. Eldin Villafañe

Evangelio y cultura en el contexto hispano, por el Dr. Virgilio Elizondo

La iglesia en Neplantla (la "tierra en el medio"), por la Prof. Daisy
Machado

Las epístolas pastorales, por el Dr. Osvaldo Vena

Una lectura feminista del Nuevo Testamento, por la Dra. María Pilar
Aquino

La predicación pastoral: Una perspectiva hispana, por el Dr. Osvaldo
Mottesl.

Cada curso llevará dos (2) horas de crédito. Cada estudiante podrá tomar un máximo de dos (2) cursos. Habrá ayuda financiera para cubrir parte de los gastos de viaje, cuarto, comida y matrícula. Pida más información a:

Dr. Pablo A. Jiménez
AETH
P. O. Box 520
Decatur, Georgia 30031

o llame al (404) 373-5495, de lunes a viernes, de 9:30 a.m. a 4:30 p.m. EST

Las solicitudes completadas antes del 15 de febrero de 1996 recibirán consideración especial.

